

# UCR - AFT LOCAL 1966 AFL - CIO

## University Council - American Federation of Teachers

February 19, 1982

### WHAT THE UNION IS DOING

Whenever I try to recruit someone into the AFT on this campus, I am usually faced with skeptical responses:

"The Union hasn't ever done anything, so what is the point of my paying dues? It is just a waste of money."

"A union will never get anywhere here. This campus is too conservative."

"Are we going to have an election soon? I'll join when we are ready for an election."

"I used to belong. I've paid my dues to the idea of unionism. But it never got anywhere, so I dropped out."

"I'll join when you have more members and prove that you can really accomplish something."

These reactions do not reveal an antagonism to the idea of unionism. Quite the opposite. They suggest that people would like a strong union and fail to give their support because the AFT is not strong enough. This state of mind creates a self-fulfilling prophesy. As long as you, the individual, will not join, the union remains weak for all others who face the choice of whether to join. Each individual decision to join makes a stronger union for the next person to join. It is necessary for those with courage and convictions to take the first step and provide leadership for others.

But apart from the problem of deciding to take a stand, the skepticism described above is based on a faulty premise. The union has done and is doing things, some of which are vital to you. The union can do many things before an election is held and before we engage in collective bargaining. The purpose of this newsletter is to tell you a little about what we have been doing. We shall not try to present a complete catalogue here, but only a sampling of activities.

1. Handle Grievances. The AFT handles individual grievances. When a member believes he/she has been unjustly treated, we help them to file a grievance and work with them until it is resolved. If legal counsel is required, UC-AFT can provide it. An example of a successfully fought



grievance case concerns the English as a Second Language Teachers (see a recent Highlander 2/9/82 for the complete story).

2. Watch Over Rule Changes. Because we do not have collective bargaining, the University administration changes rules unilaterally. For instance, they recently reclassified lecturers so as to reduce their pay and other benefits while leaving their teaching load unaltered. AFT responds to these kinds of actions by holding "Meet and Consults" with the administration to clarify what actions have been taken and to inform them of our opposition when their action implies a "take-away." They sometimes back down in the face of such pressure, as in the decision not to close the campus over Christmas.

3. Conduct Legal Cases. The AFT is fighting several court cases on behalf of its members and of the faculty as a class. One major case which is in the courts now concerns the right of a faculty member to have access to his or her personnel file, a right that is granted to every other public employee in the state except employees of the University of California.

4. Lobby in Sacramento. Our lobbyist is Mary Bergan, statewide CFT/AFT representative. A recent issue of California Journal rates her as third best lobbyist among 700.

5. Watch Over Rights to Organize. The law states that employees of the University have a right to form independent organizations. The administration frequently acts to thwart such organization. For instance, they are denying employee organizations access to the internal mail system, although such access is provided for in the law. AFT has filed several "Unfair Labor Practices" with the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) to ensure that the administration does not engage in union-busting tactics. These actions are not only aimed at protecting our own organization, but any employee organization that wishes to form on the UC campuses.

6. Publications. The AFT puts out publications at various levels of its organization. The international and state organizations have regular magazines and newsletters. UC Council, the coordinating body of AFT locals on the nine campuses of the University of California, publishes the University Guardian which you have probably seen. A new publication, called Off the Track, is being put out specially for lecturers. Our UCR local has been active, too, in putting together newsletters like this one,

and publishing a regular column in the Highlander. Such publications help disseminate information that is of relevance to us all as employees. They provide a forum for airing issues that need to be discussed. And they enable us to develop a collective voice, a presence that the administration cannot ignore.

7. Create a Community. Last but not least, a union enables people to come together, It serves a social function, helping people to feel less alienated in their place of work. Sometimes one feels very alone and isolated, especially in a highly competitive and hierarchical environment like the University. We have tried to counter that, by holding social and educational functions. Even our weekly Wednesday meetings help to alleviate our isolation and bring together people from different departments. On this campus, AFT has a close coalition with AFSCME, the other AFL-CIO union here. We believe that all workers at UCR form an interdependent community and we are working to foster an environment in which all workers, regardless of rank, can participate.

These are some of the things we have been doing. With more members, especially active and involved members, we could do a lot more. Why not join a growing movement now, while it is still very open to your ideas and unique contribution? At least check it out by coming to one of our weekly meetings on Wednesdays at noon in Watkins 1347. We need you. And more important, you need a union.



UNIVERSITY COUNCIL-American Federation of Teachers  
The Union for Faculty, Academic and Professional Employees

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I wish to join the University Council-AFT, and authorize it to represent me in my employment relationship with the University of California in order to promote my economic and general welfare.

NAME(Please print) \_\_\_\_\_ You can either have your dues deducted automatically from your paycheck on a monthly basis or we will send a bill to your home address each quarter and you mail in your dues. Check which you prefer.

CAMPUS \_\_\_\_\_ DEPT. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ a monthly payroll deduction. (we will send you a UC payroll form to sign)

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

CAMPUS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ a quarterly bill (provide your home address)

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

UC-AFT monthly dues are 3/4 of 1 percent on monthly gross salary: a maximum of \$15 per month and a minimum of \$4 per month.

P.S. Union dues are tax deductible.

Please return this form to: UNIVERSITY COUNCIL-AFT  
122 Cypress  
Santa Ana, CA 92701  
(714) 542-0101  
or Edna Bonacich  
Sociology Dept. UCR

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